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ABSTRACT

The Ryukyu Islands form a chain stretching from the southernmost point of mainland Japan to the northern tip of Taiwan. The largest and most important of these islands is Okinawa. This paper documents the influence of other nations and cultures upon the Okinawan culture, and focuses upon U.S. cultural influence. In the mid-nineteenth century, Commodore Matthew Perry led an expedition to Okinawa as part of U.S. efforts to open Japan to trade. Okinawa proved to have great strategic significance during World War II, and the fighting caused the island's people and their culture to be devastated. The U.S. military was instrumental in the rebuilding of Okinawa and has remained a significant presence on the island to the present day. The impact of this presence upon Okinawan culture is discussed in terms of economics, education, religion, social and cultural changes, and changes in women's roles. The island was returned by the United States to Japanese control in 1972. An 18-item bibliography and two maps are among the appended items. (DB)

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AMERICAN INFLUENCE ON OKINAWAN CULTURE BEFORE 1972

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AMERICAN INFLUENCE ON OKINAWAN CULTURE BEFORE 1972

The Kingdom of Ryukyu is a place of beauty in the
Southern Ocean,
Gathered here are the treasures of three countries,
Korea, The Great Ming, and Japan,
It is a treasure island which emerged from the sea
between China and Japan,
Its ships ply between ten thousand countries, and it is
filled with wondrous things which are to be seen
everywhere.
(Inscription on a bell cast for Shuri Castle in 1458.
Translated from Ryukyu Seifu Hakubutsukan, 1964.)

(Preliminary Overview)

Like a knotted rope, the Ryukyu Islands extend from the southern tip of Kyushu to the northeastern tip of Taiwan. Known by the Chinese as the "floating dragon" (Roy, 1962:54), this archipelago is comprised of 73 islands, with a total area of less than half the size of Kamagawa, one of Japan's smallest prefectures (Kishaba, 1988:7).

According to Bailey Willis ("Why The Japanese Islands?", 1940), the Ryukyus are actually the tips of submerged mountains which have penetrated the floor of the Pacific Ocean. They

form a natural barrier between the East China Sea and the Pacific. Coral reefs are common around many of the Ryukyu Islands.

Four hundred miles from mainland Japan, the sinuous shape of Okinawa stretches placidly across 60 miles of emerald green water. It is from 2 to 16 miles wide, and the largest and most important island in the Ryukyu chain. There are 454 square miles of land in Okinawa (Pearson, 1969:16-17), which represents 53% of the total land area (Kodanshu Encyclopedia of Japan, 1983:84).

To the north are expansive mountain ranges covered in dense green vegetation. Precipitous peaks and sloping terraces obscure adjacent valleys where scarlet hibiscus flowers and fukugi trees wait like ghosts in a mirage of primeval heat. Much of this terrain remains uncultivated; although pineapple production is becoming more apparent. Agriculture regions are found primarily in central and southern Okinawa, where the soil is usually less arid and the land easier to cultivate.

The average annual temperature of Nahā, Okinawa is 72 degrees Fahrenheit (Glacken, 1955:20-21). Flowing northward past the Ryukyus, the Kuroshio (Black Current) significantly influences the sub-tropical climate of moderate temperatures and excessive humidity. Typhoons frequently occur in late summer and early fall.

Population demographics for 1969 showed 294,000 people living in Naha, and 67,000 in Koza. In addition, 80,000 U.S.

military personnel and civilians were living in Okinawa (Billard, 1969), and occupied 25% of the island (Reed, 1969:119). The 1970 census counted 945,111 permanent residents living in the Ryukyus. Approximately 850,000 were Okinawans (McCune, 1975:117).

Okinawans have referred to their island as "Uchina" (Hogg, 1973:13); but no other country used this name. Japan called the island Okinawa, which literally translated means, "rope in the offing" (Kerr, 1958:22). When the Kingdom of Ryukyu became a prefecture of Japan in 1879, the name Okinawa was accepted ("Welcome Okusan", 1982-1983:262).

Although evidence is not conclusive regarding ethnological origins of the Ryukyuan people, archaeological research reveals prehistoric settlements of Mongol, Ainu (northern Japan), and Malay. Richard Pearson contends that "...peopling of the Ryukyus by conventional physical anthropology should be regarded with skepticism unless one takes into account the extreme random pattering which can occur because of drift and isolation." (Pearson, 1969:137-138).

Recent studies on Okinawan culture have identified various aspects of early Japanese culture in the Ryukyu Islands. There are definable racial characteristics similar to both Okinawans and Japanese; but Okinawans are usually shorter and stockier, and have darker complexions (McCune, 1975:34).

Throughout its historical development, Okinawa has maintained a recurrent ability to adapt to new and imposing

cultures. The Okinawan people have acquired a resiliency which, enables them to fit their individual lives into the frequently changing political and social structures. To some, these dispositions seem imaginative and clever, and to others, they appear to be obliging concessions which allow the Okinawans greater autonomy.

During the 14th Century, Okinawa was divided into three kingdoms: Hukuzan, Nanzan, and Chuzan. Satto declared himself "master of Chuzan" in 1349 (Kerr, 1958:63). During his reign, Okinawa preserved a tributary relationship with China. This commercial and cultural exchange continued for five hundred years ("Welcome Okusan", 1982-1983:258).

Sho Hashi became King of Chuzan in the early 15th Century, and eventually unified the three kingdoms. The government was moved to Shuri where it remained until 1879 when it was moved again to Naha. Okinawan trade gradually expanded into Japan, Korea, and into the East Indies. Okinawa enjoyed appreciable prosperity during these Golden Days of Chuzan. China remained a good and dependable teacher, particularly in the fields of literature, education, and administration.

"...life centered on the refinements of etiquette, music, poetry and dance." ("Welcome Okusan", 1982-1983:258).

Also in the 15th Century, Okinawa began formal relations with Japan. Okinawan representatives were sent to Kyoto through the southern province of Satsuma, and in 1441 rights of jurisdiction over the Ryukyus were conferred to the Lord of

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Satsuma (Higa, 1963:2). Possibly fearing reprisal from Japan, China made no contending claims to sovereignty of Okinawa.

When a group of warriors from Satsuma invaded Okinawa in 1609 demanding payment of taxes, Okinawan prosperity diminished. Ironically enough, Satsuma agreed to arrange trade routes in exchange for providing protection ("Welcome Okusan", 1982-1983:258). Under Satsuma jurisdiction, Okinawa became increasingly susceptible to Japanese policy.

"The growing Japanese influence during the years that followed increased Okinawan interest in other folk crafts as well as in Japanese drama and temple architecture." (Hogg, 1973:102).

Caught between their ancient allegiance to China and their more recent submission to Japan, the Okinawans were compelled to live as appeasingly as possible. They learned to bend with the wind, no matter how intensely it blew, and it didn't matter if the wind blew from Japan, China, Europe, or America (Hogg, 1973:103). This small, quiet island deserved the tribute conferred upon it by a Chinese Emperor in 1579. Written in kanji on the Shuri no Mon (Gate of Shuri), is the inscription: "Land of Propriety" (Kerr, 1958:193).

After the Meiji Restoration (1868), new Japanese rulers became more suspicious of Western intentions in Okinawa. This sudden concern induced closer contacts with Shuri officials, and ultimately resulted in the resolution of Ryukyuan independence. With the deposition of Sho Tai, the last

Ryukyuan King, in 1879, the Ryukyu Islands were officially declared a prefecture of Japan (Glacken, 1955:40).

Between the Satsuma invasion of 1609 and Japanese annexation, Okinawan life "idled along...." (Hogg, 1973:103).

Changes occurring within Japan included:

- reorganization of the government
- adoption of a Western calendar
- establishment of a new educational system
- vaccination
- change to European dress for officials
- edicts against long hair

"Japan was to become the medium through which Western ideas were brought to bear on the old Okinawan culture." (Glacken, 1955:41).

Okinawa's reluctance to replace traditional customs with the newer, more innovative ideas being subsumed into a more progressive Japanese culture, actually subsided following Japan's success in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 (Glacken, 1955:42). The Okinawans were changing from a reclusive, uninformed people to "one of the most widely traveled and informed peoples of the Orient." (Glacken, 1955:43).

According to Shannon McCune, "Okinawa was Japan's poorest and most neglected prefecture from 1879 to 1945." Heavy taxation exceeded the productive capacity of the people. Voting rights were restricted. Okinawan men were usually rejected by the Japanese armed forces because of deficiencies

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in literacy and height.

"The Ryukyu Islands, overly crowded and poverty-stricken, offered little inducement for large Japanese investments for economic development." (McCune, 1975:51). Because of its proximity to China and Japan, Okinawan culture reflected various influences of both civilizations. Throughout most of the 19th Century, however, the Ryukyus remained a relatively isolated and remote culture.

The Alceste left England on February 9, 1816 with the intention of securing trade routes between Great Britain and the Far East. Although these attempts were unsuccessful, some researchers feel that the visit of the Alceste did indirectly affect the opening of Japan, and in some ways actually prepared the Japanese for Commodore Perry's initial visit (M'Leod, 1963:xv). John M'Leod, surgeon on the Alceste, conveyed in his written account, an indelible narrative which described the simplicity and congeniality of the Ryukyuan people.

The first protestant missionary, Dr. Bernard Jean Bettelheim, was sent by the "Loo Choo (Chinese pronunciation of Ryukyu) Naval Mission" as a medical emissary (Roy, 1962:65). He arrived in Naha on May 1, 1846, aboard the British ship, Starling, and was permitted by Okinawan officials to spend his first night in the ancient Buddhist Gokoku-ji (temple) in Naminoue. When the priests returned the next morning, he adamantly refused to leave. Dr. Bettelheim and his family occupied Gokoku-ji for the next seven years (Kerr,

1958:279-284).

Okinawan merchants were not permitted to sell food to the family, "so he and his wife took what they needed in the market and left their own estimation of the value." (Roy, 1962:65). Bettelheim's "extravagant and rude behavior" confused, then angered the Okinawans (Kerr, 1958:285).

When gates were locked, Bettelheim resorted to breaking through fences, and then abruptly entered private houses to preach the word of God. He routinely solicited religious propaganda which Okinawan authorities collected and returned to him.

His strange erratic conduct always attracted large and curious crowds. The immense spectacles he wore gave him "a grotesque appearance in Okinawan eyes." (Kerr, 1958:287). He professed to love the people and to hate governmental officials whom he decided interfered with his conversion efforts. Bettelheim was a controversial, zealous man, whose circuitous behavior had by 1849 received international attention (Kerr, 1958:291). He was "more than a little mad", "imprudent and dictatorial", "a little careless of the truth." (Kerr, 1958:287, 295).

When Dr. Bettelheim left Okinawa in 1854, the coins which he and his wife had left in the market were returned to him. He had left behind one convert, who was confined, and who later died in prison.

From 1850 to 1854, Bettelheim used vaccination to immunize

against smallpox (McCune, 1975:130). He was apparently successful in translating some books of the Bible into the Okinawan language ("Welcome Okusan", 1982-1983:286). Despite these accomplishments, "...he had failed miserably in his mission, a fact that may well have embittered him, with the result that by the time of Perry's arrival he was cordially disliked by the islanders." (Hogg, 1973:105).

(Initial American Cultural Influence)

"I can conceive of no greater act of humanity than to protect these miserable people against the oppressions of their tyrannical rulers. Inhabiting an island beautiful beyond description, they are trodden to earth. Indeed, it will be nothing more than strict justice to protect the authorities from the tyranny of their Japanese ruler, since by their acts of stealthy kindness, to us they have compromised themselves with their vindictive masters. By protecting the higher classes and dispersing the spies, the lower orders will be allowed to hold up their heads. Hence it will be polite and just to continue to these people the protection which I shall give them so long as I have the power and countenance of American authority." (Commodore Matthew C. Perry, 1853).

To pursue increasing Western interests in the Ryukyus during the 19th Century, the United States deployed an "expeditionary squadron" (Higa, 1963:3). commanded by Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry of Kingston, Rhode Island. The Susquehanna, accompanied by four other ships, arrived at

Tomari, Okinawa on May 26, 1853.

"The new intruder was a dour, pompous man of sixty, a career naval officer who had attained the honorary rank of commodore and who had been sent by his government to prise open the closed doors of Japan...." (Hogg, 1973:104).

He considered occupation of principal Ryukyuan ports to be significant, and in a letter to the Secretary of the Navy, dated December 14, 1852, Perry asserted that such occupation "would be a measure not only justified by the strictest rules of moral law, but by what is also to be considered by the laws of stern necessity." Perry's determination and resolute policy were certainly an example of American gunboat diplomacy in Asia (Higa, 1963:3-4).

Although Perry's main purpose was to establish trade routes between the West and Japan, the "insistent, persuasive" ("Welcome Okusan" 1982-1983:263) commodore initiated the signing of The Compact of Friendship and Commerce agreement in Naha on July 17, 1854 (Higa, 1963:4). His intention had been to adopt Naha harbor as a "port of call for a trans-Pacific steamship line which, he thought, would effectively achieve American control of Oriental trade and politics." (Zabilka, 1966:18). He successfully secured a coal depot to be used by American ships.

Perry's "Grand Design" (Kerr, 1958:302) advocated specific policies to enhance national interest. He had carefully considered the possible consequences of American expansion in

the Far East, and had received the endorsement of the United States government to negotiate treaties if opportunities arouse.

Commodore Perry's daring and dramatic visits to Shuri Castle caused dismay and apprehension among Okinawan officials. There was even some indication that Washington considered Perry too ambitious, and felt that some of his proposals were embarrassing.

On march 31, 1854, the Treaty of Kanagawa was signed. In addition to opening the Japanese ports of Shimoda and Hakodate to trade, the treaty provided for the appointment of an American consul who would reside at Shimoda (Reynolds, 1963:118). In 1855, Townsend Harris became the first American consul to Japan (Reynolds, 1963:133). With the opening of Japan, American interest in Okinawa declined.

Perry defined American policy in Asia, and encouraged the Japanese "to adopt methods of Western industrialization and technology...." (Reynolds, 1963:133). Glacken's research credits the Perry expedition for inducing many of the cultural changes which occurred after Japan's annexation of Okinawa.

Since Okinawans were excluded from all influential positions in all areas of Okinawan life, except education, Okinawan social reforms were not nearly as apparent as those sweeping across a more modernized Japan. In fact, the Okinawan people were perceived by a prejudiced and dispassionate Japanese government to be somewhat inferior (Watanabe, 1970:9).

"Knowledge of Western culture, so eagerly sought by the Japanese in the late Tokugawa era and even more eagerly after the Meiji restoration of 1868, was introduced into the Ryukyus by way of Japan and after a considerable filtering: it was the practical, technical, scientific knowledge, particularly in public health, medicine, agriculture, and plant breeding - knowledge which the Japanese could adopt, modify, and extend for their own uses throughout the empire - that was valued." (Glacken, 1955:299).

Many of the social changes occurring in Okinawa at the turn of the 20th Century were precipitated by a revolutionary plan which permitted individual ownership and inheritance of land, and were a direct result of Japanese policy. This shift from communal to private ownership had a profound effect on traditional Okinawan community life, since it virtually eliminated the venerable feudal system.

Another indication of Japan's subtle modernization of Okinawa was the Okinawan acceptance of shorter hair, "which resembled the Western style." (Glacken, 1955:230). Men and boys of the old Ryukyuan Kindgdom had worn their hair long. "A patch of the crown was shaved, and the long glossy hair was gathered into a tight knot on top and held there with two hairpins." (Glacken, 1955:229).

(Imposed American Culture - War and Occupation)

Operation Iceberg began in the cool dawn of April 1, 1945 when 183,000 Allied troops landed on the beaches of western

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Okinawa (Appleman, Burns, Gugeler, Stevens, 1965:36,68). Prior to 1945, Okinawa was essentially unknown, obscured by the importance of more prominent countries both in Asia and in Europe. With the invasion on Easter Sunday, Okinawa suddenly became the "Keystone of the Pacific."

In this brief and bloody campaign which ended on June 22, 12,520 Americans were killed or missing. Japanese casualties numbered approximately 110,000 (Appleman, Burns, Gugeler, Stevens, 1965:473). Some estimates of Okinawan civilian deaths were as high as 150,000 (Gow, 1986:204). McCune, however, reported anywhere from 46,000 to 100,000 Okinawan casualties (McCune, 1975:59). Several Okinawans lost their lives while conscripts of the Japanese 32nd Army; others were simply in the way of retreating Japanese troops.

"The human toll was appalling and most Okinawans lost everything except what could be carried." (Gow, 1986:204). One out of eight Okinawans had been killed (Reed, 1969:119). With 24% (Billard, 1969:426) of the island's buildings demolished, 90% of the population was left homeless (Reed, 1969:119). "All that remained of towns and villages ... was rubble and rotting flesh." (Gow, 1986:204).

Okinawa was a dead island. Shuri and Naha had been obliterated. Almost all commercial and industrial facilities had been eliminated. Public and family records were destroyed, and irreplaceable pieces of Ryukyuan culture were lost forever. Disease and pestilence were as common as ancient fears and

superstitions. Broken families living in despair and abject poverty, searched the debris of fallen cities for a memory and for a new beginning. The legacy of an island people had crumbled like broken dreams, and was little more than dust in the wind.

Only the remnants of a culture remained in those closing days of 1945. Japan had its own problems, and Okinawa was left alone in an abysmal blackness of death and destruction.

More humanistic American soldiers administered emergency relief to surviving Okinawans. Refugee camps were constructed, usually at the northern end of the island, and military government units at each camp assisted with coordination and supervision (Higa, 1963:24). Administration of the Ryukyu Islands by an American military government had begun. Its primary concerns were "civilian relief and rehabilitation...." (McCune, 1975:62).

There was some indication that America's conceptions of the Okinawans and Japanese were conspicuously different. Okinawans were not inherently Japanese, and American military policies made clear distinctions between mainland Japan and the Ryukyu Islands. The SCAP (Supreme Command for Allied Powers) issued a directive in 1946 which placed Okinawa under administrative jurisdiction of the "Military Government of Okinawa" (Gow, 1986:216). All communications between Okinawa and Japan were discreetly controlled by the United States

and Japan were discreetly controlled by the United States (Watanabe, 1970:20-21). Disposition of American policy contributed to the "exclusive influence of the United States in Okinawa...." (Watanabe, 1970:21).

An extensive rebuilding program was supervised and funded exclusively by the United States. By 1946 the American military government had financed the building of 18,602 prefabricated houses (Higa, 1963:26). Although American postwar actions were not entirely altruistic, the substantial contributions were critical to the survival of the Okinawan people. In one significant respect, postwar Okinawa resembled the Okinawa of the 1890's. Neither the Americans nor the Japanese had been invited. The Okinawans were similarly victims of circumstance.

The United States Congress established a GARIOA (Government and Relief in Occupied Areas) appropriation in excess of 200 million dollars to be used in the Ryukyus in 1946 ("Welcome Okusan", 1982-1983:259). GARIOA economic aid was supplemented by support from advisers skilled in education, economics, public works, public health and welfare, government and law, and commerce and industry. The Department of Education became the Department of Civil Information and Education. Dissemination of democratic ideals was part of its new mission (Diffenderfer, 1955:273,284).

"Road networks, a power-generation plant and transmission system, harbor and water-supply improvements, agricultural

products, lumber, cement -" were all realized because of GARIOA funding (Zabilka, 1966:21). Construction projects employed homeless, jobless Ryukyuan laborers, and gradually a war-torn economy began to piece itself together. "The U.S. was turning Okinawa into an occupied land, where Americanization proceeded as if in direct proportion to the retreat of Japanese power." (Iriye, 1974:125).

With expanding American interest in Okinawa, steady economic growth continued. Increasing numbers of Okinawans continued to be employed by United States forces - 42,000 by 1949. Okinawans could now borrow from a recently secured "Counterpart Fund." Yen backed by American dollars, and by letters of credit issued by the Bank of the Ryukyus enabled many Okinawans to open their own businesses (Diffenderfer, 1955:284).

"During the war years, which culminated in the battle for Okinawa, it was difficult for the old to transmit the traditional culture to the young; the unsettled and uncertain conditions at home and the years of military service required of the young men interfered with the transmission of many old customs - which the young now refer to as superstitions. Men over fifty often speak of customs of which the younger people have never heard. Postwar conditions, especially the presence of the Americans, have directed the interests of the young toward technology, applied science, and Western political ideas." (Glacken, 1955:300).

During postwar years, repatriation actually "created an atmosphere congenial to change." (Glacken, 1955:300). Returning Okinawans had acquired a more discerning awareness of the outside world. Restoration of old customs and traditions was not as essential as the reconstruction of cities and roads.

"When people of diverse cultures live side by side, the results are always interesting. Before World War II most Americans had never heard of Okinawa. The islanders were content with their island and had little interest in foreign lands or people. Inevitably, some of our culture has rubbed off on them, and some of theirs on us." (Diffenderfer, 1955:286).

On December 5, 1950, two years before cessation of the American Occupation of Japan, the military government in Okinawa was changed to USCAR. "The purpose of the U.S. Civil Administration of the Ruykyu (sic) Islands was to help develop a democratic Ryukyuan Government, to build the economy under a system of free enterprise, and to improve health and living standards." ("Welcome Okusan", 1982-1983:260). USCAR became the GRI (Government of the Ryukyu Islands) less than two years later (McCune, 1975:62).

The Civil Administrator dispensed policy commensurate with orders which he received from the Commanding General of the Ryukyu Command (RYCOM). It was increasingly more evident that the American government wanted retention of Okinawa as a strategic location, and that USCAR policy decisions were

considerably influenced by the military.

In July, 1957, by an executive order of President Eisenhower, a High Commissioner was to be appointed by the Secretary of Defense, after consultation with the Secretary of State anc with the endorsement of the President. The High Commissioner retained the authority to appoint a GRI Chief Executive, and to remove from office any elected GRI official. He was also empowered to veto any bill, and to annul any law. Since RYCOM and the High Commissioner were the same person, Okinawa remained essentially under American military jurisdiction. Concerns of the Okinawan people were acknowledged; but military considerations usually received a higher priority. The Civil Administrator "could not effect changes contrary to the will of the commanding general." (Kodanshu Encyclopedia of Japan, 1983:88-89).

Decisively, early postwar Okinawan political parties were regulated by an American military administration which intermittently reviewed the entire Okinawan political system. The minipulation of the Okinawan people was considered by some Okinawan leaders as a kind of psychological warfare. Gradually, however, greater political autonomy was extended to the Okinawan people; but ubiquitous American military pervasion could not be denied.

General Joseph Lawton Collins announced in 1949 that the United States would keep Okinawa "indefinitely", and a $50,000,000 construction allotment was procured for the

development of military bases in the Ryukyu Islands (Iriye, 1974:174). By 1969 Okinawa had 117 American military installations responsible for the employment of 60,000 Okinawans (Reed, 1969:117,119).

America's policy to Okinawa has always been one of buying time." (Watanabe, 1970:62). Maintaining the status quo insured that military objectives received sustained and intensive deliberation. American military bases in Okinawa played significiant strategic roles in both the Korean and Vietnam wars. "The unstable, if not chaotic, political situation in Okinawa showed the Okinawan disappointment at American indecisiveness." (Watanabe, 1970:63).

The U.S. dollar became the official legal tender on September 16, 1958. United States' economic assistance increased from $6,000,000 annually in 1960 to more than $12,000,000 in 1962 (Kodanshu Encyclopedia of Japan, 1983:90). Annual U.S. spending in 1969 amounted to $260,000,000 (Billard, 1969:441). By 1971, payment of salaries from American funds to Okinawans employed on U.S. military bases was $70,000,000. Total expenditures associated with the American military presence in the Ryukyu Islands in 1971 was approximately $240,000,000, which was almost one-third of the local GNP. A total exceeding one billion dollars had been spent on the construction of various military facilities (McCune, 1975:91).

USCAR's decision to make Japanese the "language of instruction", in Okinawan schools was another perceptible

attempt to alter Okinawan culture (McCune, 1975:122). Textbooks prepared in Occupied Japan were reproduced in Okinawa, and used to teach Okinawan school children English and U.S. history. "Okinawa's school system is gradually undergoing change to bring about more democratic ways of handling students." ("National Geographic, April, 1950:550).

A model of the American three year junior high school began in Okinawa in 1948. New additions to a curriculum which already included English language studies were American and English literature. "The distinguishing feature of the new education is instruction in democratic ideas." (Glacken, 1955:276).

The English Language Institute was founded in Nago in 1953. "The school accepts Ryukyuan students with the triple aim of teaching them English, improving their teaching skills, and developing their understanding of Western culture." United States' government, history and literature comprised the primary curriculum. Lectures and required written assignments were in English. Communication in Japanese was actually discouraged (Zabilka, 1966:38).

A National Leaders Program permitted Okinawan businessmen, government officials, and teachers to tour the United States for ninety days. Their acquisition of knowledge and the aggregation of individual experiences had transferable application in Okinawa (Zabilka, 1966:37).

In 1971 there were three Japanese language radio

broadcasting stations, and five stations with English language broadcast formats. Over four and a half million dollars were spent on imported publications - primarily English language periodicals (McCune, 1975:127).

Public health programs were responsible for declining mortality rates, and generally improved health among the Okinawan people. U.S. authorities, with the assistance of various support agencies, sponsored a comprehensive school lunch program which changed the dietary habits of Okinawan school children. Large quantities of wheat and other grains were imported from the United States for this program (McCune, 1975:118).

In his Final Report as High Commissioner of the Ryukyu Islands, Lt. General J.B. Lampert stated: "The success of this and similar U.S. programs since 1945 is indicated by the additional four to six inches of growth which characterizes today's Okinawan youth compared to his pre-war counterpart." (McCune, 1975:118,120).

The Okinawan people entered the 1970's with a viable economy intensely supported by United States' expenditures and policies. In the late 1960's, Okinawa's annual GNP was actually higher than the GNP in Japan (McCune, 1975:97). It was evident that a broken and devastated economy was being repaired. American dollars had not only rebuilt the cities, but had changed the entire landscape, and the cultural perspective which emerged was not the one the Okinawans

remembered. Okinawan cultural standards were being diminished by "cheap American customs introduced without the deeper levels of Western tradition." (Roy, 1962:80).

Even though there was an appreciation for the growing prosperity infused by continued American occupation, the Okinawans were "beginning to feel once again like a forgotten people." (Hogg, 1973:112). Okinawa was an island without a country. Its people remained "emotionally loyal" to Japan (Roy, 1962:80); but most felt a sense of distance and isolation. Reversion to Japan became an increasingly popular sentiment.

"One of the greatest fears, though not often openly expressed, is that Okinawans will once again be treated as second-class citizens in modern Japan. The attitude of the Japanese toward the Okinawans has always been patronizing. They have thought of them as country yokels and have placed little value on their culture." (McCune, 1975:142).

"Despite the fact that the military administration did contribute significantly to the economy of the island, it also threatened to further erode Okinawa's unique culture." (Gow, 1986:216).

Beyond the neatly manicured lawns and suburban styled housing familiar to American military bases, were pawnshops, bars, and miles of neon lights which advertised gambling and prostitution. They were not built by the Americans; but they were there because American servicemen wanted them.

"Okinawa has changed enormously in the nearly two decades of American control. No doubt some American imprint will always remain in Okinawan culture." (Higa, 1963:101).

It was customary to open some of the American military clubs to the Okinawan populace. American - Ryukyuan Friendship Nights became extremely popular to both military men and young Okinawan women. These glimpses of "affluent America" enhanced the sense of contrast between prosperity and adversity, and there were those who felt that this "taste of good, clean, affluent American life" was responsible for increased delinquency among younger Okinawans. "American slot machines, for example, have triggered a craze for gambling among the islanders that has resulted in bankruptcies and suicides (Grilli, and Murakami, 1972:39-41).

"As a result of increasing modernization and ease of movement of people and of ideas, ethnic and cultural differences have lost some of their distinctiveness. Radio and TV propagate a uniformity of speech. With the rapid pace of standardization - too often at the lowest common level - of speech, culture and society, rich varieties which have given color and life to the Okinawan mosaic are diminishing." (McCune, 1975:33).

Pizzerias, laundromats, drive-in restaurants, and used car lots were obtrusive examples of escalating American culture in Okinawa. They extended for miles along both sides of U.S. built Route One. "Much of the island has come to resemble a

particular vulger version of American suburbia...." Since U.S. spending "now accounts for 60% of Okinawa's $644.4 million G.N.P.", most Okinawan businessmen realized that an American withdrawal would severely damage the local economy (Time, May 9, 1969:43).

To attract American customers, many Okinawan businesses translated their signs from Japanese to English. The frequently inaccurate translations were interestingly amusing (Reed, 1969:438).

- "Bolt Sell Store"
- "Juwely Make & Fix"
- "For Lent - TV"
- "Auto Defilers"
- "Arbor Front" (harbor front)

Early catholic and protestant missionaries were unwanted and unsuccessful. They continued to come to Japan and to Okinawa, frequently desecrating and destroying Buddhist temples. Finally, in 1631, all Christian activities were prohibited; but even reprisals of punishment and death did not stop those missionaries who considered "martyrdom" the ultimate sacrifice (Kerr, 1958:169-174).

When the Salvation Army came to Okinawa in 1917, several denominational churches had already established foundations there. Prior to the war, there were twelve "church buildings" in Okinawa, and "eight hundred Christians." Ten of the buildings were destroyed during the war, the other two badly

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damaged. Over half of the Christians were dead by 1945. Only one pastor remained in Okinawa. The others had either gone to Japan or had been killed.

Following an invitation from the Okinawans, American missionaries returned to resume individual conversion campaigns. During the next five years, the army of Christ grew appreciably. Seventh-Day Adventists began their work in the early 1950's. They had four churches, an expanding hospital, schools, and a membership of four hundred by 1962 (Roy, 1962:65-68).

Soon after the war, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Holiness churches merged with the Salvation Army to form an association which eventually became the United Church of Christ of Okinawa (UCCO). The Army and Air Force protestant churches began providing printed literature in 1953 to the Sunday schools of the UCCO (Zabilka, 1966:83-84). Chaplains and servicemen rebuilt nine churches for Okinawan congregations between 1950 and 1951 (Roy, 1962:67).

Both protestant and catholic church movements gained considerable support from military chaplains after World War II. Several American catholic missionaries came to Okinawa and established "an orphanage, a dispensary, schools and churches." By 1965 the catholic church in the Ryukyu Islands had a membership of 3,677 professed Christians (McCune, 1975:139).

Bible classes were organized in several villages. The Christian Mission at Nago was founded in 1945. A Bible college

began there in 1948. Summer camps, new missions, and larger congregations were the results of dedicated American missionaries (Zabilka, 1966:85).

The impelling danger to the Christian Church was not the intrusion of older religions, but "...the temptation to an easy acceptance of the standards of the Western business and military community, or a rigid rejection of them...." (Roy, 1962:73).

Because of obligations imposed by a traditional Okinawan family system, women usually accepted a more restricted social life than men. Exceptions were those women who had lived in places like Hawaii, where American influences had impacted their daily lives. Periodicals accentuating the changing social roles of American women became popular reading among many Okinawan women. Inevitable contacts with American soldiers and civilians were responsible for new and changing attitudes (Glacken, 1955:232).

Having the most decisive influence, however, were American cinema and FEN (Far East Network) radio and television, which frequently portrayed women as impulsive and independent. Later generations of Okinawan women became more Westernized in appearance and conduct. Disparity was quickly discarded, since it had no place in a modern, progressive society.

Preserving Okinawan culture "...has not been easy to do in the rush toward modernization and the Japanization and Americanization of the Ryukyuan scene." (McCune, 1975:141).

(Summary and Final Comments)

"As a result of increasing modernization and ease of movement of people and ideas, ethnic and cultural differences have lost some of their distinctiveness." (McCune, 1975:33).

Most Okinawans can remember a time long before the Japanese came - a time when a culture had been indigenous to their remote island. These quiet, unassuming people had learned from one another, and traditions remained intrinsic in the social structure from one generation to the next. Change and the modern world were still too many centuries away. Suddenly, from the shadows of another dawn, strange new faces watched indifferently. The Americans had come to fight a war. A culture simply got in the way, and Okinawa was about to change forever.

The old and the new were eventually juxtaposed, and the echoes from a dead past slowly faded. Japan had suffered a resounding defeat, and abruptly turned its back on a devastated Okinawan people. In the ashes of a barren and desolate landscape were the surviving fragments of a culture; but no one seemed to care. While the Okinawans were manipulated and maneuvered by an American military government, a new history was being written. In the beginning, changes came gradually. Optimism replaced despair; prosperity brightened the distant horizon. Finally, an expanse of blue sky appeared, and a new Okinawa had emerged.

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In the early shadows of a summer evening, the discordant notes of a hidden shamisen hang in the air like yesterday's memories. A fisherman slowly unties his sabani, and the slapping sound of the water against the ancient rocks of the East China Sea becomes imperceptible in the rumbling whir of an outboard motor. A glint of sunlight through an open window reveals for an instant the new Okinawans, who have put away the silverware and the dishes, and who now sit patiently watching American television.

It had been formally decided by President Richard Nixon and Prime Minister Sato that on May 15, 1972, Okinawa would officially be returned to Japan ("Welcome Okusan", 1982-1983:260-261).

"Farewell, dear isle!-on you may breath
Of civil discord never blow!
Far from your shores be plague and death,
And far-oh! far-the hostile foe!" (John M'Leod, 1817).

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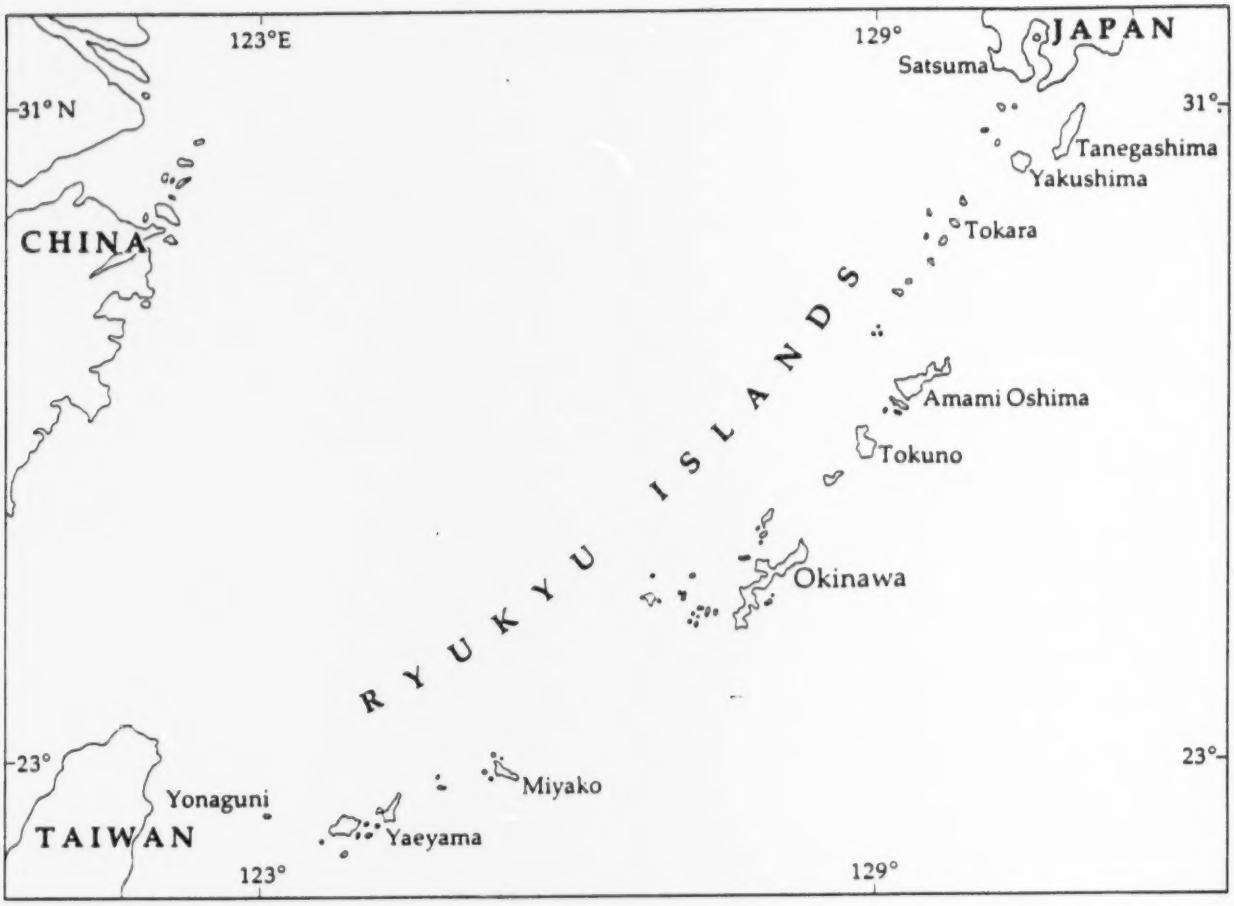
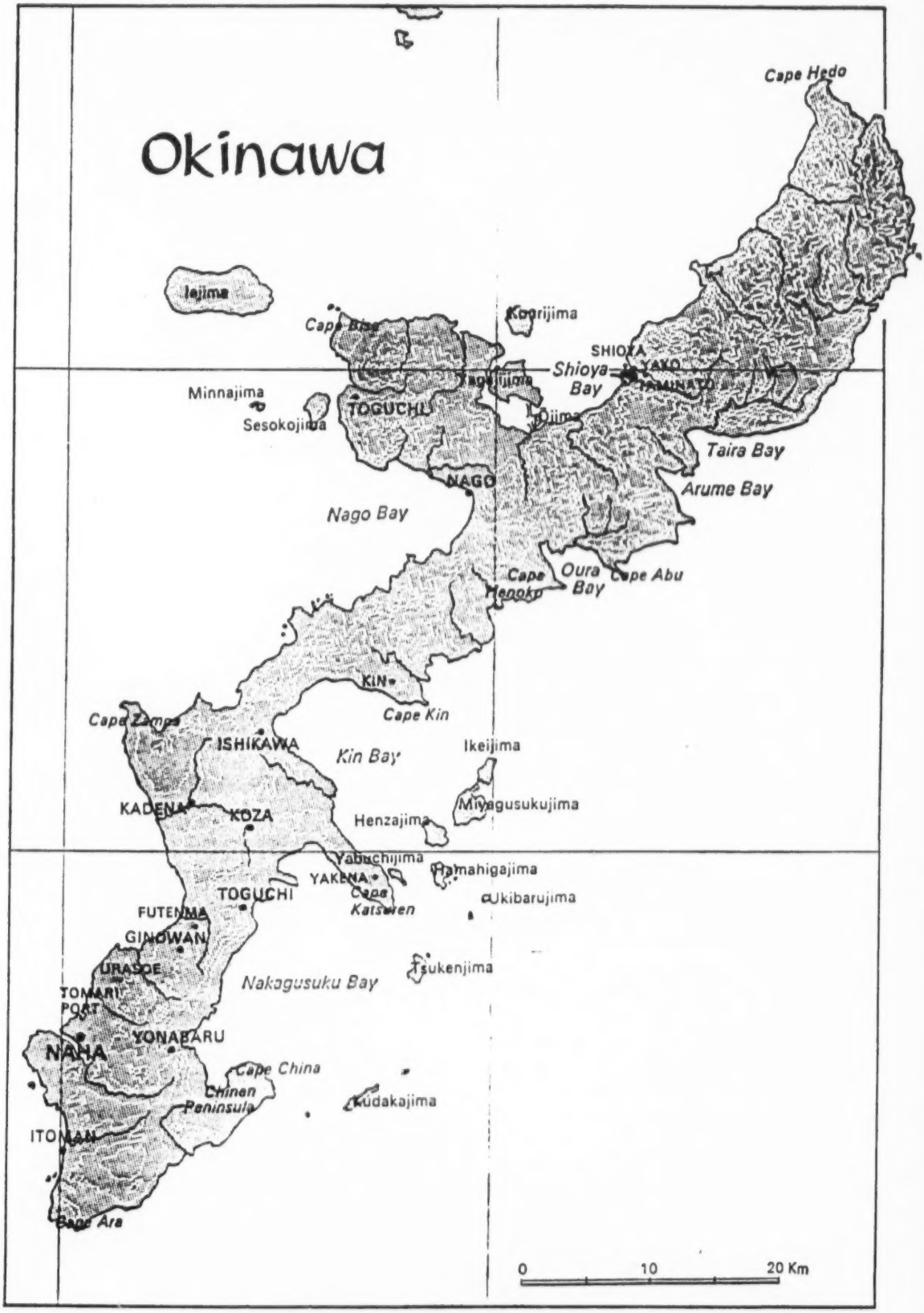


#1 Ryukyu Islands



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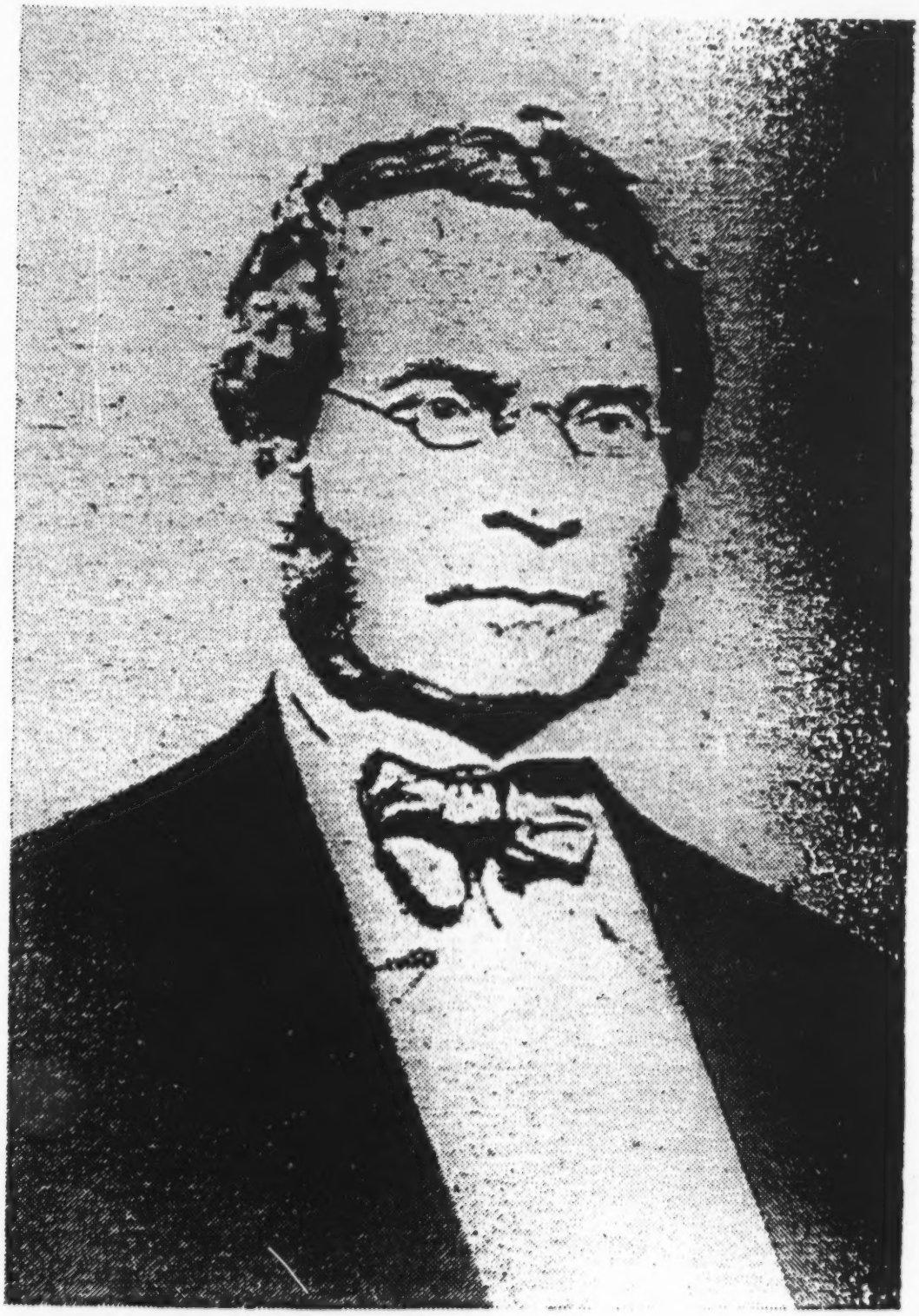

#3 Dr. Bernard Jean Bettelheim

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#4 Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry

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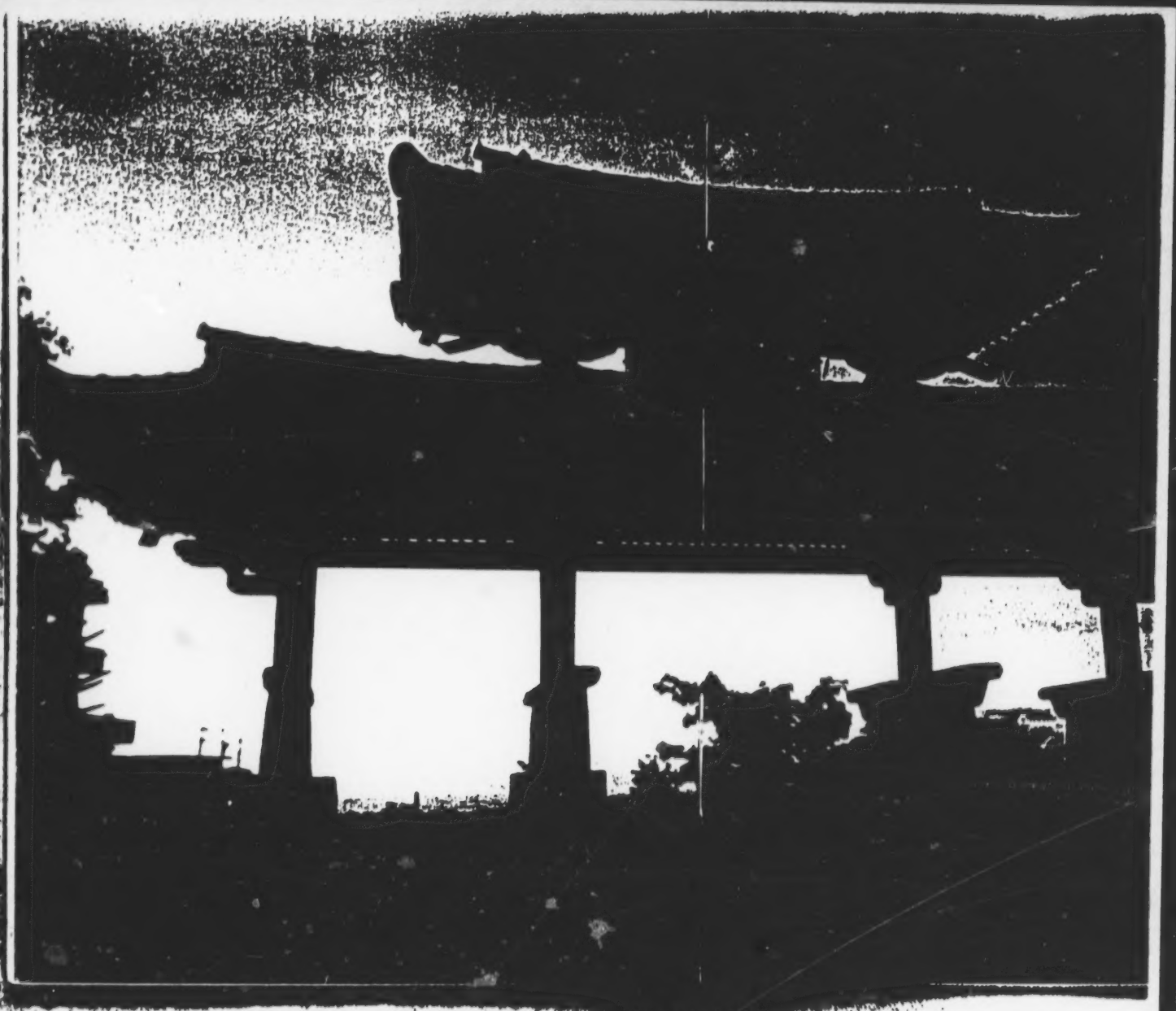

#5 Shuri no Mon (Gate of Shuri)